

ADVANCING NEUROPSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY IN AFRICA: AfcNP SCHOOL 2025



The African College of Neuropsychopharmacology (AfcNP), led by Prof. Lukoye Atwoli, AfcNP School Director, and Prof. Peter Kalivas, Director of the Center for Opioid and Cocaine Addiction (COCA) at the Medical University of South Carolina, successfully hosted the second edition of the AfcNP School from June 1st to June 8th, 2025, at Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya. This year's school focused on the theme ***“The intersection of HIV/AIDS, brain disorders, and substance use disorders,”*** addressing some of the most urgent health challenges in Africa.

Objectives:

- To provide early career researchers with the latest insights into the intersection of HIV/AIDS, brain disorders, and substance use disorders, focusing on both theoretical and practical approaches.
- To enhance collaboration between early career researchers and established scientists across the world, fostering global partnerships that contribute to the advancement of neuropsychopharmacology and mental health research.

- To empower early career scientists with the knowledge and skills to take leadership roles in research and treatment of complex neuropsychopharmacology issues.

Program Overview:

The one-week program offered a blend of rigorous academic lectures and interactive sessions, giving participants deep insights into neuropsychopharmacology's relevance in Africa's healthcare landscape. The curriculum highlighted how HIV/AIDS, brain disorders, and substance use intersect, requiring holistic and integrated treatment strategies.

Engagement and Growth:

This year's school attracted 27 early career researchers from 14 African countries, a notable increase from last year's 20 participants. The number of applicants also saw a remarkable rise, doubling from 242 in 2024 to 556 in 2025, underscoring the growing demand for cutting-edge neuropsychopharmacology training on the continent. The early career researchers selected for this year's program were of top quality, demonstrating impressive expertise and dedication to advancing mental health and neuropsychopharmacology in Africa. Participants engaged in enriching discussions with leading international experts and worked closely with faculty through panel discussions, student presentations, and group discussions.

In keeping with the goal of providing students with a rich pool of mentors and collaborators, we were pleased to invite 29 distinguished faculty members, including 15 local faculty members, 5 faculty members from the USA, and the remaining 9 faculty members from other African countries. This diverse group of experts ensured that participants had access to a wide range of knowledge, perspectives, and guidance. It also fostered an environment of collaboration and learning, empowering students to build professional relationships with mentors from both local and international contexts.

Key Features:

- **Lectures:** Distinguished scientists shared their expertise on the intersection of HIV/AIDS, brain disorders, and substance use, offering new perspectives and research avenues.
- **Panel Discussions:** Experts and participants engaged in panel discussions on specific neuropsychopharmacology topics, exploring trends, challenges, and breakthroughs in the field.
- **Student Presentations:** Participants had the opportunity to present their research to a diverse audience, receiving valuable feedback and guidance from faculty and peers.
- **Group Discussions:** Collaborative group discussions allowed participants to explore the topics more thoroughly and share insights on addressing neuropsychopharmacology issues in their home countries.

Acknowledgments:

The success of the AfCNP School 2025 was made possible through the generous funding support from the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP), as well as the remaining balance from the previous year's school, which was supported by both ACNP and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). We would also like to extend our gratitude to ACNP for providing distinguished speakers, whose expertise enriched the learning experience for all participants. Their continued investment ensures that the AfCNP School remains a vital platform for the next generation of African researchers and provides essential support to address critical health challenges in neuropsychopharmacology.

The AfCNP is proud of the success of this year's school and looks forward to expanding this initiative further in future editions. With ongoing funding and collaboration, we are confident that the AfCNP School will continue to shape the future of neuropsychopharmacology and mental health research across Africa.

Watch the video [here](#)